

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3594

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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E. O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, TH

SUBJ: THE PRC BADMINTON TEAM IN THAILAND

1. THE OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BY THE PRC BADMINTON PLAYERS DURING THREE DAYS OF EXHIBITION MATCHES IN BANGKOK FURTHER BURNISHED THE IMAGE OF CHINA AS A SPORTS POWER, AND CLEARLY ADDED TO AN ALREADY GROWING SENSE OF PRIDE ON THE PART OF BANGKOK'S CHINESE COMMUNITY IN THE PERFORMANCE OF CHINESE IN THE SPORTS ARENA. THE HEAVILY PRO-CHINESE CROWDS AT THE NATIONAL STADIUM FOR THE MATCHES TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE SOME LATENT CHAUVINIST FEELINGS OF PRIDE AND ETHNIC IDENTITY.

2. FROM THE POLITICAL STANDPOINT OF TALKS WITH RTG OFFICIALS, THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT MUCH WAS ACCOMPLISHED OR EVEN ATTEMPTED. SEVERAL HIGH RANKING RTG OFFICIALS MET WITH MEMBERS OF THE PRC TEAM AND ITS ACCOMPANYING "ADVISORS", BUT IF ANYTHING WAS PLANNED IN THE WAY OF

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SUBSTANTIVE EXCHANGES IT QUITE LIKELY BECAME LOST IN

THE CONFUSION AND EXCITEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT RESIGNATION. EVEN THE CHANCE TO MEASURE ACCURATELY THE IMPACT OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHINESE-MALAYSIAN RELATIONS WAS LOST IN THE LOCAL CONCENTRATION ON THE CABINET CRISIS. THE PRC MUST BE WONDERING HOW MANY FALSE STARTS IT MUST GO THROUGH IN ORDER TO MAKE PROGRESS IN THE DIALOGUE WITH THE RTG.

3. THE CHINESE LANGUAGE PRESS, WHICH THE POLICE RECENTLY WARNED TO MODERATE ITS SWING TO THE LEFT, USED THE BADMINTON TEAM'S VISIT AND PERFORMANCE TO CONTINUE THE LAUDATORY TREATMENT OF THINGS CHINESE IN GENERAL AND THINGS PRC IN PARTICULAR. TRY AS THEY MIGHT, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT ANY OF THE SPORTS WRITERS FOR THE CHINESE PAPERS COULD POSSIBLY HAVE SOARED TO THE DIZZYING HEIGHTS OF THE "BANGKOK POST'S" ANTON PERERA DESCRIBING ONE OF THE SETS AS "A GEM OF PUREST RAY SERENE," AND THE PERFORMANCE OF "TIGER TANG" IN PARTICULAR AS HAVING "BURNED UP THE COURT LIKE A BRIGHT STAR OF THE FIRMAMENT." THE "SHEER MAGIC" OF THE "CHINESE SHUTTLE CONJURORS," AS WELL AS THE PROSE OF MR. PERERA LEAVES MANY OF US GASPING AND WONDERING WHAT MIRACLE THE CHINESE WILL CREATE NEXT.

4. LOCAL REACTION TO THE PRC-MALAYSIAN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE OPENING OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A SEPTEL AS THIS ISSUE EMERGES FROM THE THAI ABSORPTION WITH THE FORMATION OF THEIR NEW GOVERNMENT. MASTERS

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